FOREIGN SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

SECURITY: UNCLASSIFIED (Restricted Appendix Attached) PRIORITY: AIR POUCH

TO: Department of State

745h.00/5-850

FROM: LAGOS 217 May 8, 1950 1 Appendix

REF: Consulate General's Despatch No. 196 of April 27, 1950

SUBJECT: Political and Economic Events in Nigeria for the Two-week Period Ending May 6, 1950

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POLITICAL

Sudden Visit of Governor to London

His Excellency the Governor, Sir John MACPHERSON, left by air for London on May 1, 1950. The departure was unannounced and most abrupt. It was stated by Government officials that the trip was for a medical check up and that Sir John would be back in Lagos within ten days. Mr. H. F. MARSHALL, Acting Chief Secretary, will be the Officer Administering the Government in the absence of His Excellency.

Fitzgerald Report on Enugu Riots

There has been considerable speculation in the Lagos press about the continued delay in the publication of the Fitzgerald Report which is concerned with the causes of the riots in the Enugu coal mines last November. The press appears concerned at the delay in the release of the report and wonders whether the Governor's sudden trip to London (see above) was not connected with the report.

ECONOMIC

American Roadmaking and Logging Equipment for French Africa

See Restricted Appendix.

Visits of American Businessmen and Potential Dollar Investments in Nigeria.

Three American businessmen visited Lagos during the week beginning May 1. Mr. Frederick W. RICHMOND, President of the United States Foreign Corporation, 745 Fifth Avenue, New York 22, New York. Mr. Richmond appeared to be interested in the possibilities of purchasing agricultural products and timber.

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He discussed possible investments in Nigeria with Government officials and private businessmen.

Mr. Bernard KOPEL, (of Russian nationality), representative from the Paris office of Warner Brothers Pictures, was in Lagos to instigate a law suit his firm has decided to undertake against a Nigerian who allegedly stole some 16 mm. prints of Warner Brothers films which were in the possession of the British Army. Mr. Kopel anticipates a protracted legal suit but his company apparently attaches considerable importance to the case. Mr. Kopel was assured of the Consulate General's interest in the case and copies of all correspondence are to be furnished this office for its information.

Mr. Charles E. PRIOR of the American Smelting and Refining Company together with Mr. Meredith BROWNE (British subject) of the Mines Development Syndicate also called at the Consulate General. Mr. Prior's company, he announced, has virtually decided to finance the exploitation of the lead/zinc deposits in Abakaliki near Enugu in the Eastern Provinces of Nigeria. Exploratory work has been under Mr. Browne's direction and Mr. Prior stated he would undoubtedly be retained under the new financial arrangement which he stated will be entirely American; he estimated the potential total investment from the United States by the American Smelting and Refining Company at several millions of dollars. If this plan goes through, as it gives every indication of doing, it will be the most important single dollar investment in Nigeria since the war.

LABOR

Announcement has been made of a strike on the Nigerian railway system. There has been considerable trouble between the railway management and labor union for some time but it is doubted that the present unrest will evolve into a full-fledged strike as announced by the union.

AGRICULTURE

The first loads of superphosphate fertilizer pellets have arrived in the Northern Provinces to be used in helping increase the yield per acre of peanuts in that area. Some 481 tons have arrived so far; this will be mainly distributed in Kano and Katsina Provinces in June when the new peanut crop is planted. The fertilizer is to be distributed free this season and next after which cost charges will be made.

COMMUNICATIONS

It has been announced that telephone communication will

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soon be available between Lagos and Kaduna, capital of the Northern Provinces. Carrier wave telephone equipment is to be used and it is hoped to extend the telephone connection from Lagos and Kaduna to Zaria, Jos and Kano. At the moment there is no telephonic communication possible from the south to north of the Niger River, although there is a fairly adequate though self-contained telephonic system in use within each of the three main Provincial Regions.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Nigerian Festival of The Arts

The first Nigerian Festival of the Arts which opened on April 23, 1950 and closed April 29, 1950, was considered "a glorious week in the cultural history of Nigeria". Following the opening by His Excellency the Governor, Sir John Macpherson, there were daily competitions with more than 600 entries in art, crafts, literature, drama, music and dancing. On the closing day, a final concert was held at which Lady Macpherson distributed the prizes.

Press

The Eastern Nigeria Guardian and the Eastern States Express, major newspapers of the Eastern Provinces, on May 1 and 3, 1950, published two more thoughtful editorials as a direct result of the series of five broadcast lectures entitled "A History of the American Negro", given as a program of the "Voice of America in Nigeria". They stand as additional evidence of the effectiveness of USIS in Nigeria.

Motion Pictures

Recently arrived statistics on USIS film audiences show that from February 6 to April 8, 1950, the Extra-Mural Studies Department of University College, Ibadan, exhibited thirteen USIS films to 15,788 persons in the vicinity of Ibadan and Ilorin.

For the Consul General:

Harris H. Williams
American Vice Consul

Copy to: American Embassy, London

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Appendix to Despatch No. 217 dated May 8, 1950 from the American Consulate General, Lagos, Nigeria, subject: "Political and Economic Events in Nigeria for the Two-week Period Ending May 6, 1950".

APPENDIX

ECONOMIC

American Roadmaking and Logging Equipment for French Africa

Mr. C. F. CASTLIO, Export Representative of R. G. LeTourneau, Inc., Peoria, Illinois, called with regard to the clearance of some heavy LeTourneau roadmaking equipment now held at the Port at Lagos which he hopes to get out shortly for shipment to the French in the Lake Chad area. As he said, if it is not released soon it will be impossible to send it during the rainy season which would mean holding up until almost the end of 1950. He also discussed the LeTourneau distribution in British West Africa. His company is being represented by F. A. Thompson Company of London which in turn will have the following of its subsidiaries as representatives:

J. Allen & Co. at Lagos for Nigeria and the British Cameroons
Bartholomew at Accra for the Gold Coast
Staveley for Sierra Leone and Gambia

to specialize in roadmaking equipment and logging machinery. With regard to the latter, he pointed out that many of the forests in this part of the world are being denuded of suitable timber near the rivers, so there should be a good opportunity for the sale of LeTourneau heavy loggers to transport huge logs to railway and port loading stations. He does not really expect much activity in the British areas until about the end of 1950.

Road Building From Dakar to Brazzaville

The Department is no doubt familiar with the present road-building program of the French West and Equatorial African Governments to complete serviceable all-weather roads from Dakar to Brazzaville but Mr. Castlio's comments may be interesting. He said that they are using a good deal of LeTourneau equipment to build either Type 1 soil stabilization roads using cement, clay and gravel or Type 2 laterite or asphalt surface roads. The roads should provide in about three years for heavy traffic on the main line: Dakar - Bamako - Bobo-Dioulasso - Ouagadougou - Niamey - Fort Lamy - Bangui - Brazzaville with principal feeder roads as follows: Bobo-Dioulasso to Conakry in French Guinea;

Ouagadougou

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Ouagadougou to Abidjan, Ivory Coast; Niamey to Cotonou, Dahomey; Fort Lamy to Douala, French Cameroons. It is significant that the main road apparently is designed to run close to the British colonial territories of Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast, Nigeria and the Gambia, that are really wedges into French areas. The French system will by-pass them by its main road running around the British areas while the feeder roads will run between the British territories somewhat like the fingers of an outstretched hand.

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